

T.S. Supergraders Form Own League

By
Mike
Causey

The government's 10,000 career executives—people whose expertise, power and key placement give them virtual day-to-day control over the federal machine—are organizing.

Membership of the group, which could become one of the most potent policymaking bodies in the nation, already includes top legal and tax officials and key aides from rate-setting agencies.

Disturbed by the adverse impact of Watergate on the government, the politicization of federal agencies and a five-year executive pay freeze during a time of runaway inflation, the "supergraders" have formed the Federal Executives League.

Leaders of the league hope to get support from the scientists, administrators, judges and technical experts who make the bureaucracy tick and who run the federal show no matter which political party controls Congress or the White House.

Nearly a dozen top career officials met here yesterday to formally set up the organization, which has quietly been in the making for more than a month. The organization is the first of its kind in government.

A list of "resolves" drawn up by league founders says that its primary goal will be the "protection and advancement of the integrity, dedication, professional standing and general well-being of the senior civil service," with special emphasis on promoting "ethical, efficient and effective practices and procedures" at the top levels of government.

The league says it also intends to "protect the senior civil service from any and all political or other extraneous pressures" that affect the performance of the top levels of government.

The founders of the league are concerned that their motives might be misunderstood or that the first-time banding to-

gether of top career staff may be viewed as an unmanageable super-lobby.

Although they downplay the pay angle, it is a fact that league leaders are concerned about the stagnation of top-level federal pay, which has not been raised since 1969. Since the rank-and-file federal pay raise in October, several thousand additional government workers have moved into the \$36,000 pay range, which now includes all Grade 17 and Grade 18 workers, and most Grade 16 employees.

Congress has refused to act on a bill proposed by former President Nixon that would raise the legal ceiling on career federal pay from \$36,000 to \$41,000, although Congress has voted itself new financial fringe benefits this year, because of "inflation."

Eugene G. Gosley, an administrative law judge with the National Labor Relations Board, is president of the league, and Rexford Resler, a top official with the U.S. Forest Service, is board chairman. Other officers are Robert Rhodes, assistant director of Interstate Commerce Commission's bureau of economics; Lois Dean, a top official at Housing and Urban Development, and John O'Brien, Internal Revenue Service's district director in Providence, R.I.

League leaders hope to rent office space here in Washington and plan to file for a charter as a nonprofit organization within a week. Meanwhile, they will wait to see if their fellow supergraders are interested in signing up, and also the reaction of Congress and the political establishment in government to this potential powerhouse.

Check Flap: More than 2,000 paychecks were delivered to National Institutes of Health workers yesterday without the official signatures needed to make them legal. When employees got the bad news, as banks and credit unions refused to cash the checks, NIH officials got Treasury to bring its check-signing machine to the NIH campus and workers queued up to have their checks made legal.

As of late yesterday, NIH believes it had tracked down most of the unsigned checks and could pay rent, mortgages and buy groceries.